

Is There a Letter for Me?

The Department of Corrections victim programs manager will notify you if an offender deposits a letter for you in the Accountability Letter Bank.

REQUIRED INFORMATION:

Today's date: _____

Offender: _____

Crime: _____

Crime location: _____

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Signature: _____

HELPFUL BUT NOT REQUIRED

Offender prison number: _____

Date and year of Crime: _____

Court case number: _____

Your email address: _____

Mail to:

Victim Programs Manager
Montana Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 201301
Helena, MT 59620-1301

Where Is Your offender?

Register for our free, confidential, automated VINE service to track the current whereabouts of your offender.

If your offender is under Montana Department of Corrections supervision, VINE (Victim Information & Notification Everyday) will contact you by telephone, email or text message with custody status updates, such as facility transfers, release into the community, or sentence expiration. VINE will notify you of upcoming parole and sentence review hearings, and tell you if the offender dies in custody or escapes.

Call VINE toll-free at (800) 456-3076 or register online at www.vinelink.com. You may also download a free mobile app for your iPod or smart phone at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/vinemobile/id625472495?mt=8> or <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?>



**Montana Department of Corrections
Victim Programs**

Phone: (406) 444-7461; (888) 223-6332
Fax: (406) 444-4920
E-mail: shilander@mt.gov

Offender Accountability Letters



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A brochure for victims/survivors

The Department of Corrections... Helping Victims Heal

What is an offender accountability letter?

Many felony offenders are sincerely sorry for the harm they have caused others. Offenders who have demonstrated that they are accountable for their crimes may write letters to their victims for deposit in the Accountability Letter Bank.

The Montana Department of Corrections (MDOC) delivers the letters to victims who request them.

Will my offender find out where I live?

No. The Department of Corrections holds victim contact information in strict confidence and would never share it with offenders. The department does not allow offenders to mail letters directly to their victims.

Will a letter cause me pain?

You might experience grief or fear when you read a letter from the offender who committed a crime against you. Most victims who receive offender accountability

letters report a degree of healing when they hear that the offender is sincerely remorseful.

The victim programs manager will read you the letter over the phone and help you process the contents if you wish. Call (888) 223-6332 to discuss this further.

What if the offender blames me?

Offenders who participate in the accountability letter process have reached a point in their treatment where they understand that they are solely responsible for their criminal acts. Accountability letters are reviewed by victim service professionals. Abusive letters, including ones that make excuses or blame the victims, are returned to the offender.

Am I supposed to forgive?

The decision to forgive another person is intensely personal. Forgiveness for the offender is not the purpose of an accountability letter. Offenders must acknowledge that they harmed their victims and they may write about how they intend to change their lives through treatment, programming, and self-reflection.

How would I find out if there is a letter for me?

The MDOC victim programs manager will contact you if we have your current address on file. You may call us toll free at (888) 223-6332 any time to ask if we have an accountability letter for you.

Will the offender know if I accept the accountability letter?

The Department of Corrections does not tell offenders if their letters are accepted unless you would like for the offender to know this.

Can I respond to the offender?

Yes. Offenders who participate in the letter program have been told not to *expect* a response from the victim(s). However, if you would like to respond, you may do so through the Accountability Letter Bank.

Please do not respond directly to the offender, as doing so may be a violation of a no-contact order.

Letters considered to be abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be delivered to the offenders.

**Offender Accountability Letter Bank
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Victim Programs Manager**

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